

Bad Intentions

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Summary: In which Natasha plays match-maker and Darcy has an existential crisis. (Steve/Darcy)

Bad Intentions

AN: This fic contains strong language (lots of it) as well as smut (eventually). If you don't like it, please don't read it.

* * *

><p>Bad Intentions

I.

"Wait, hold on. You want me to go on a date with Captain fucking America?"

Natasha Romanov nods sharply. Her eyes are deadly, deadly serious: like if knives had eyeballs deadly.

"Yes."

"Isn't that likeâ€¦ desecrating a bald eagle or something?" Darcy sputters.

She has a full cup of Starbucks in her hand and she quickly drains half, sure her caffeine-deprived brain is hearing things. Darcy looks past the other woman's shoulder into the empty lab, hoping for some means of escape and knowing she is on her own.

Natasha rolls her eyes and Darcy realizes she can count the number of conversations she's had with the Black Widow on one hand. None of them had been particularly comfortable or pleasant. Several had included blood and lots and lots of guns.

"We have it from reliable sources that Steve Rogers is not a virgin."

Darcy chokes and sputters, dribbling coffee all over her favorite The Clash t-shirt.

"Y-you want me to s-sleep with Captain America? Dude, prostitution was totally not in my contract."

Natasha smirks, the most human expression Darcy has ever seen on her beautiful, terrifying face. "I'd be surprised if Steve managed to do more than kiss your hand, Miss. Lewis. Deflowered, yes. Confident, no."

"This sounds like a really bad idea. And this coming from a girl who once thought running around New Mexico with a clearly unstable scientist seemed like a solid career path."

The Black Widow gives an exasperated sigh, as if Darcy is an unruly child who doesn't want to share and play nice with the other children. "Are you telling me you wouldn't be willing to spend a night out with Captain fucking America?" she mocks. "Eating free dinner and drinking fine-"

"Wait, did you say free?"

* * *

><p>Natasha 'suggests' she wear red and Darcy enjoys having a pulse enough to comply.</p>

To be fair, she looks damn good in red.

Her skinny jeans and V-neck red shirt with matching fiery pumps seem safe enoughâ€¦ maybe? The date could end with her running for her life, in all honesty, so she stuffs a pair of ratty Converse in her purse, just to be safe. They should hand out safety tips for anyone stupid enough to date an Avenger.

On the cab ride over -â€"to Brooklyn of all places- she considers, definitely not for the first time, how fucking weird her life is. She's been set up on a blind date with Steve Rogers, otherwise known as Captain America, otherwise known as Star-Spangled-McStudMuffin. She wonders if he wears his suit under his clothes like Superman in the comics. She wonders why she finds the idea stupidly attractive.

Okay, so it isn't a total blind date. They've met likeâ€¦ twice. Kinda.

One of those times she'd been half unconscious and pretty delirious â€"-she vaguely remembers asking him if it was hard to fit his ass in his skin tight suit- so it barely counts. The other time he'd been very 'yes ma'am,' 'it's a pleasure ma'am,' about the whole thing and he clearly hadn't been paying much actual attention to her. Though she had caught him glancing down at her breasts, so that was a good sign. Right?

Black Widow â€"-or Scary Lady in Latex, as Darcy likes to think of her- hadn't been wrong though. Going on a date with Captain America

definitely has it's perks.

Steve is really, really good looking.

Like, disgustingly good looking. Like, panties, what panties?— good looking. But he also happens to be a national icon who is also, technically, over ninety years old with a chip on his shoulder the size of Manhattan. Complicated didn't even begin to describe his whole situation and Darcy's life is complex enough with Jane, Eric, and a lumbering Norse god consistently dragging her into one world catastrophe after another.

But she's woman enough to give it a shot, at least. Besides, living in New York ain't cheap and one learns to never turn down a free meal.

Plus he seems like a pretty decent dude, heroics aside. Maybe they could come out of the whole thing as unlikely friends. Buddies, even. Darcy is really good at making dude friends. She's much less good at finding boyfriends sans prison records or secret families.

Stupidly nervous, she puts on some bright red lipstick, pays the cabbie, and steps into the pretty low key looking bar with a definite 'speak easy' aesthetic going on like she's ready for battle. Going on a date with an Avenger probably isn't far off the mark, she figures.

She spots him immediately at the bar, looking like some fucking ad from the 1940's, and she feels an anxious jitter that has nothing to do with how painfully awkward this whole thing is going to be zing through her. He's rocking a tight white tee, fitted jeans, and brown boots with a brown leather jacket slung over the back his chair and he is so classically handsome that she seriously considers running for the door.

Only the thought of the Black Widow in some adjacent building with a sniper rifle focused in on her gets Darcy through the entryway and moving forward.

The bar isn't very crowded and her heels are loud enough on the wood floors that he turns to look at her as she approaches. She can tell he's as weird about the whole thing as she is, but his smile is kind and welcoming. At least he'll let her down easy, she thinks as she gives him a small wave and immediately takes the seat next to him.

"Your idea or Natasha's?" she blurts immediately in way of greeting, sweeping a hand to indicate the bar around them.

A slight smile. Jesus, his eyes are blue. Like so fucking blue.

"Natasha's. She tries to make me comfortable."

"Are you? Comfortable that is?" she asks, forcing herself not to lick her lips nervously. It's a seriously stupid question and she regrets asking it the moment the words leave her lips. Her dad always told her not to ask questions she doesn't really want an answer to.

He takes a sip of beer â€“Ew, Budweiser- and gives a small chuckle. It sounds kind of weird, like maybe he doesn't laugh very often. The thought makes her sad.

"I've been in worse places," he says and there's a small teasing bite to his words. The dude lived through WWII, she reminds herself, trying not to be totally weirded out by the whole thing.

The bartender interrupts and asks her for her drink order. Her mind briefly goes blank and she asks for the first thing that pops in her head.

"Sex on the beach?"

She immediately cringes. God, she is so not a freshman in college anymore. The bartender doesn't seem to give a shit, though, and sets about making her stupid drink while she quietly refrains from banging her head on the sticky bar.

Next to her, Steve has turned a bit pink. "T-that's a drink?" he asks.

Darcy laughs nervously. "Ah, yeah. Haven't had one since this awful, awful frat party during spring break my freshman year of college. I spent most of the next day regretting my entire life. I kind of just panicked and ordered the first thing that came to mind. Heh..."

He huffs out another uncertain laugh and studies her curiously out of the corner of his eye, as if he's only just noticed her, and she politely pretends not to notice.

"Um, I'm Dar-"

"Darcy, Darcy Lewis," he interrupts. "I remember."

"Oh- well, that's nice, I mean good, that you remember meâ€¦ yeah. Well, I mean I know who you are, obviously. I mean who doesn't. Uh, well I guess no one really does, huh-"

God Darcy, shut up!

Thankfully her drink arrives and she shoves the straw in her mouth.

"So, uh, you work for Dr. Foster right?" he asks in a strained voice. God, she hates small talk.

"Yeahâ€¦ ever since all that drama in New Mexico." The drink is making her feel a bit better and she runs a hand through her loose hair and tosses it over her shoulder. "Bastards still have my iPod hidden away somewhere."

"iPod?"

"Yeah, like a record playerâ€¦ but without the record-"

"I know what an iPod is, I was just wondering why they took it."

Darcy flushes, embarrassed and takes a loud sip of her drink.

"Because they're fascist assholes? Mostly I think they do it to fuck with me" "Shit, I'm sorry, I curse a lot when I'm nervous."

Another smile. This one actually reaches his eyes. "I noticed."

Darcy clears her throat, rambling. "Jane once had to fake sick to get me out of this big meeting because I couldn't stop saying fuck every other word." She watches him take another sip of beer. "Can you even _get _drunk?"

The smile is gone and he shakes his head, perfect golden hair gleaming in the dim lighting. God, he parts his hair on a perfect line, combed and styled, and some insane impulse demands she ruin it. Her fingers twitch on the bar and she tucks them into her lap.

"No. Notâ€| anymore."

She frowns. "Then why a bar?"

Steve snorts and drains the last of his beer. "According to Nat, this is how people 'date' now."

Darcy is briefly distracted as she attempts to imagine the master assassin, Natasha Romanov, as just 'Nat,'. She doesn't quite manage it, but she is suddenly and acutely determined to show Captain _fucking_ America a good time. The poor dude looks like he needs it.

"Pft, only the unimaginative ones. Besides, most people find each other on Tinder or Facebook or something, so we're already a step ahead." She finishes her drink and gets to her feet. "Are you hungry, maybe? Have you tired sushi yet?"

He looks a bit confused but then his expression softens. "Yeah, I've tried sushi."

Darcy is already feeling stupid standing there and she awkwardly tosses her hair over her shoulder again. Steve watches the movement with a familiar sort of interest that gives her a burst of courage. "Do you like it? Because I know this great little sushi bar near here, very chill, very authentic."

He hesitates for a moment before quickly draining his beer and nodding. He slides a wallet out of his back pocket and pays the bartender in cash. Darcy opens her mouth to protest but he shakes his head with an amused sort of smile. "Don't worry, Natasha insisted on paying."

Darcy shrugs it off. They can go Dutch on their next date.

Next date? _Jesus, get a hold of your lady parts, Darcy. _

Once outside she starts to lose her nerve as he heads toward a really nice old fashioned Harley parked on the curb. He fishes a spare helmet out of some mysterious motorcycle cavity and turns to her with a smile that quickly turns into a frown as he reads her expression.

"We can take a cab if you'd rather," he offers kindly and Darcy

blushes.

"No, no, that's fine. I've just, ah, never ridden on one before. A, uh, motorcycle that is. But you only live once, right?"

Steve quirks a brow, a smirk tugging at his full lips and it makes him look faintly dangerous, which does something stupid to her aforementioned lady parts. "YOLO, right?"

Darcy groans long and loud as she takes the helmet from him. "Don't ever, ever say that again."

He laughs and it's a warm sound. Like fresh baked apple pie and a balmy California summer. Damn, just being around him is making her feel more patriotic. She totally gets why they made him the poster boy for the war --Darcy would totally be willing to throw herself into the line of fire for this guy.

"What, I didn't use it right?"

Darcy scoffs. "Oh, you used it right. But you're not a fifteen year old dude-bro so you're not allowed to say it around me, those are the rules." She puts the helmet on her head, only briefly mourning the loss of her careful curled hair, and fiddles awkwardly with the straps.

"You have a lot of these rules?"

"Oh yeah, tons. Like don't ever say 'don't tell me how to freedom' unless you want me to screech like a pterodactyl. Or be super obnoxious about your dieting habits. Nothing makes me want to commit mass murder like someone explaining to me how bad a cheeseburger is for me."

He's grinning and shaking his head with a sort of bemused expression, like maybe he doesn't know what to make of her but like he doesn't really mind, and steps very close to her. He takes the helmet straps carefully from her fingers and clasps them beneath her chin. Her heart is suddenly having a very hard time not losing its shit.

It should be a serious crime to smell as good as he does. Like ten year prison sentence, minimum.

He throws his jacket around her before she's had a chance to recover and it's just so totally unfair. No one should be allowed to be so disgustingly perfect, but, then again, this is Captain America. What had she expected?

Because Darcy has seen the world almost end about four times and can totally be brave, she slips her arms into the jacket sleeves, climbs onto the back of Steve Roger's motorcycle, and wraps her arms around him. He's solid and warm and real and she leans forward and gives him directions as he kicks the bike into life. Between the vibration and the feeling of him against her arms she thinks she'd been right before --there's a good chance she won't survive a date with an Avenger.

* * *

><p>Steve can eat a lot of sushi.

"So you actually kicked Clint in the, ah, balls or is this another wild exaggeration?" he asks her as the waiter sets a fifth platter on the already crowded table.

Darcy snorts and sips her sake. She's warm and a bit buzzed and thinks she might be in a lot of trouble because it feels like they both might actually be having a good time.

The sushi place is loud and gives off the impression that maybe it hasn't passed all its health code inspections, but it's bright and lively and she's glad she brought him here. He seems much more relaxed, squished against the wall in a chair that is maybe a bit small for him with cheap chopsticks confidently in hand.

"To be fair, I didn't know who he was and he literally came out of nowhere, what was I supposed to do?"

Steve laughs and it's husky and intimate and she makes herself busy pouring soy sauce into her little dish and mixing a healthy portion of Wasabi into it. That seems safer than looking at him.

"I hear you've punched Tony in the face. A few times," she says casually.

"Well, can you blame me?"

It's Darcy's turn to laugh and she doesn't miss how he smiles in response. "I used to imagine what it would be like to hit him in the face with my clipboard the few times he visited Jane in the lab, but he's been much nicer to me since the Clint Barton's Balls incident."

He stuffs a large piece of sushi into his mouth and shakes his head, chewing and swallowing quickly. "So you're a scientist then?"

Darcy can't help cringing a little at that subtle and unintentional reminder that her job is basically total bullshit. Jane keeps her around because they are basically best friends for life at this point and the 'new' Shield allows it because she knows too much to run around willynilly anyway.

"Did I say something stupid?" he asks, disgustingly kind and considerate, and she shakes her head, selecting something from one of the plates with eel sauce on it. Her favorite.

"No, justâ€| I'm not a scientist, unless you believe Political Science counts which, you should know, nobody else does."

He frowns, an adorable little crease between his brows and she eats her sushi as delicately as possible. She completely fails, of course, as soy sauce dribbles down her chin and she mops it up quickly with her napkin.

"So why work with Dr. Foster?"

She shrugs, taking another helpful drink of sake. "A bunch of reasons. Jane is my friend, she wants me around, she pays me, and waaaay more than I deserve, you should know. She also needs someone normal around to make sure she does things like eat and drink and

sleep." He arches an amused brow at the word 'normal' but she dutifully ignores it. "And honestly there is no way Shield is going to let me go skipping off into the sunset after ah, everything I've seen. So I babysit Jane and watch a lot of YouTube videos."

Steve smirks. "YouTubeâ€| still trying to get the hang of all that. It's all completely overwhelming, by the way."

Darcy can't help the wave of pity that washes through her but she quickly shuffles it away with a determined shove. She seriously doubts that Steve wants her pity.

"You know how to use a cellphone at least, right?" she teases lightly and he smirks, pulling a brand new iPhone out of his pocket. It's got an Ironman case and she nearly chokes to death on a bit of tuna.

Steve grunts. "Tony glued it on."

"Of course he did. Do you know how to text at least?"

"I manage alright. Though I don't understand why people don't just call each other. So much easier."

"You sound like my grandfather," she says and immediately regrets it.

She's ready to throw herself on her dinner knife but Steve only laughs.

"Well, where I'm from phones were mounted on walls and you had to actually memorize phone numbers."

"Just wait till you start using Snapchat."

Steve frowns. "Snapchat?"

"Oh, my young Padawan, you have so much to learn."

"Padawan?"

Darcy groans and jabs her chopsticks at him. "Please tell me someone has made you sit down and watch Star Wars."

He chuckles, blue eyes bright and focused entirely on her. "Can't say that they have."

"You are not allowed to represent our country without seeing Star Wars. It's sacrilegious."

He eats another massive bite of sushi, somehow managing not to dribble soy sauce everywhere and chuckles, the sound muffled. "Well, maybe you can do the honors. I wouldn't want to let the American people down. "

A flush of pleasure washes through her. "It's a good thing I am so patriotic."

Something flashes in his eyes that reminds her lady parts that they exist again and he says, "A very good thing."

* * *

><p>Darcy doesn't see Steve again for almost a month.</p>

But, despite his whining, they text. Occasionally at first, just little jokes and questions here and there, but then they are texting _a lot_.

She sends him stupid GIFs and memes and random facts about her day and he sends her pictures from around the world and complains about how Tony keeps replacing all his boxers with American Flag ones and about how Thor has been making a habit of stopping into every bar and tavern they pass and buying everyone within rounds and rounds of drinks. She doesn't tell Jane this last bit because she is acutely aware of the phrase 'don't kill the messenger' and why it exists.

Their conversations never step beyond the bounds of friendship and Darcy becomes very good at convincing herself that she isn't _super_ disappointed. Jane spends the week after 'The Date' teasing her and grilling her with questions, but eventually gives up, distracted, as always, by _science_.

When Darcy does finally see him again she's in the giant shared kitchen of Stark Tower, making Jane lunch and singing loudly to Adele. He appears around the corner, dressed in his uniform sans head gear, and she screeches loudly and drops the plastic bowl in her hands. Pancake batter goes _everywhere_, including his star-spangled boots.

"Jesus Christ, I am _so_ fucking sorry. Jarvis! Stop the music please!"

"Of course, Miss Lewis. There is a mop in the storage cupboard near the elevator."

She wishes some evil villain would choose that moment to destroy Stark Tower or something as she grabs an entire roll of paper towels and falls to her knees to start cleaning the sticky mess.

Steve is laughing, of course. That kind, affectionate laugh that says without words that it's fine, and gets down to help her. She's dressed in an old sweater and leggings with boots and her hair is in a sloppy bun atop her head, large glasses perched on her nose. So _not_ how she wanted him to see her on their next meeting.

"Pancakes?" he asks as she actively avoids looking him in the eye.

Is it possible to literally ignite from blushing?

"Uh yeah, for Jane," she says lamely.

"Nice. Sorry for scaring you, by the way."

Darcy snorts, getting to her feet to dispose of the first batch of soiled paper towels.

"My fault, I was kind of zoned out. Adele does that to me."

She turns and Steve is still crouched, looking up at her with such an easy smile that she kind of just wants to push him down and kiss him into the ground. Which is completely stupid and dangerous for her health, and heart, really.

Instead she wets a few of the paper towels and kneels near him, swiping at the batter on his calves. He stops her immediately, of course, and takes over while she picks up the bowl and fetches the Swiffer, mopping up the rest of the mess.

"So you're, uh back," she says when she's done, dutifully getting more pancake mix out of the well-stocked pantry.

He leans against the counter, watching her. "Yeah, flew back early. Obviously."

"Super-Secret Squirrel mission go well?" she asks, grabbing a few eggs and some vegetable oil.

He steps into her space, picking up the whisk from the floor and rinsing it in the sink before handing it to her as she mutters a thank you.

"Pretty well, yeah. A few scrapes and bruises but nothing serious. How goes science? Jane still trying to sleep under her desk?"

Darcy rolls her eyes as she cracks the eggs. "Oh god, last night I found her trying to hide out in the cultures freezer in one of the other labs. Woman has a death wish."

"How'd you know to look there?"

Darcy grins broadly. "I didn't. I keep my lunch in there sometimes."

Steve's eyebrows shoot up and she laughs long and loud. "I'm kidding, totally kidding. Jarvis told me. Jane is still referring to him as the Great Betrayer." Steve is noticeably relieved.

There's a semi-awkward silence before she blurts, "Do you want some pancakes? No trouble to make a few more."

Steve grins and shakes his head. "Nah, I have a meeting with Furry in a minute, just came up to change."

Darcy bites her lip, trying not to picture him shirtless and failing utterly. "Oh, oh okay. Well it was nice to see you. Glad you're okay-"

"Hey, uh, did you want to watch those movies you mentioned this weekend? Assuming the world behaves for a few days."

Darcy has to swallow an instinctively over enthusiastic response. "Uh, yeah, I should be free. Saturday night work?" she says as casually as possible as she begins mixing the batter. If her hand is shaking a bit she hopes he doesn't notice.

"Yeah, Saturday is great. Is my place okay? I don't know where you

liveâ€| if it's too far-"

"Your place is fine," she blurts, only able to control so many impulses at a time and offers a sheepish smile. Her heart is doing some serious acrobatics in her chest.

Steve smiles too, running a hand through his hair in a show of boyish charm that has her thinking of kissing again. And maybe a few other things.

Jesus,_ did they have to make his uniform so tight? How is anyone supposed to function around him?_

"Uh, great. I'll text you the address. Maybe around six?"

"There are seven moves in the Star Wars series, you know. Though the three they made before this last one â€“which was amazing by the way- barley count."

His eyes go wide and he chuckles. "Well, we can make it through a few of them maybe and save the rest for another night."

Darcy feels like doing a dance at the words 'another night' but manages to refrain. Barely.

She wants to say 'it's a date' but not wanting to jinx herself, she says, "Sounds good," instead.

He gives her a bright smile, a small parting salute, and walks away. She doesn't even try to stop herself from staring at his ass.

* * *

><p>"Are you going to wear something slutty?" Jane asks on speaker phone as Darcy stares at herself in her foggy bathroom mirror.<p>

"Slutty? Really Jane? How anti-feminist of you."

Jane snorts. "You are, aren't you?"

"Dude, with boobs like mine, everything is slutty."

"Fair point."

Darcy starts brushing her drying hair, wondering when the last time she'd been so nervous for a not-date was. Probably her sophomore year of college when Hot Harrison from her Chem class asked her out. It had gone pretty terrible â€“dude kissed like a fucking horse or something- but that really wasn't the point. It had been a long, long while since some guy had her freaking out over what to wear. Not to mention that the whole 'Steve thing' is the closest she's gotten to kind of dating since the whole Ian in London thing went down in smoke and flames.

"I was thinking something casual but cuteâ€| something that says 'I'm totally low maintenance and definitely didn't spend over an hour putting on makeup and trying on twelve different outfits.'"

"Your ass looks great in yoga pants," Jane offers.

Darcy considers this seriously for a moment and then sighs. "To Steve I bet yoga pants are like wearing panty hose without a dress in public. Maybe a cute, comfy summer sort of dress?"

"Oh! Wear the one with little cherries on it! Your boobs look amazing in it, and it's probably pretty casual to someone from the 40's."

"Dude that's the dress I wear when I am trying to get laid."

"Uh, and?"

"Fair point."

* * *

><p>She wears the dress because hell, she's only human and she's kind of wondering if maybe Steve is possibly a little bit gay. Not that that is bad or anything, well, except for her libido, but whatever. Only the previous cleavage glances give her any real hope, but to be fair, she's gotten lots of straight women staring at her rack so maybe he just couldn't help it.</p>

The look on his face when he opens his apartment door kind of clears things up. The blush on his cheeks and the awkward hesitance in his voice a sure sign he at least sorta likes what he sees.

"I brought wine," she offers standing on his door mat and feeling faintly feverish. "Well, mostly for me since, you know, it doesn't do much for you."

Steve clears his throat. "I like wine."

"Super sweet wine?"

"I think I can handle it."

She looks pointedly past his shoulder and he seems to come back to himself as he gestures her inside.

"Famous last words, Cap."

She catches the faint wince at the pet name and wonders at it, making a note not to use it again.

"I thought about making dinner but I'm not much of a cook and I don't know what you like."

He's following her toward the kitchen. Darcy is good at making herself at home in new places and she slips out of her little red flats at the door.

"Well, I am always a fan of pizza. Unless that's not your thing." She glances at him as she sets her purse on the counter.

A smirk tugs at his lips and she tries not to be distracted by the low slung jeans and white t-shirt peeking out from beneath a casual plaid button up. "I'm a New Yorker, Darcy, through and through."

She really likes the way he says her name.

"Fair enough. Nothing with pineapples or olives," she warns and he fetches her a cork screw from a drawer and two wine glasses.

While he orders their pizza, she wanders. His apartment is nice but small and simple. Comfortable looking furniture, a massive T.V. and lots and lots of art books and drawings. There's one of a dog sitting on the curb near a destroyed building and she's a bit caught up in it. She touches the dog's nose, wondering if he'd done it from memory or imagination.

"Something I saw in Franceâ€| not, ah here." Steve says, startling her, and she turns.

"These are seriously incredible," she tells him and holds a wine glass out to him.

"Thanksâ€| I wasn't sure if you'd bring the movies, but I can order them off of Amazon Primeâ€| or so Nat claims."

Darcy gets another little trill of excitement at the idea of Steve talking to anyone about her, but she's a little less flattered when she remembers that 'Nat' is the Black Widow. She upsets Steve and she's got a lot more to worry about than awkward exchanges and drunk Facebook stalking.

"I brought them, they're in my purse. We have to watch them in a very specific order. The ones from the seventies first, then the newer ones. The most recent movie isn't out on DVD yet but nothing a little illegal downloading won't solve."

He lofts a brow at her, sipping the wine.

She smirks. "Gonna turn me in?"

He chuckles, something flashing in his eyes but it's gone before she can decide what it means. "Not unless the movie is really bad."

"Fair enough, but if you think its a bad movie I'm not sure we can be friends."

The pizza arrives fifteen minutes later and they dive in. They sit on the couch with the lights off, a respectful distance between them, but Darcy is hyper aware of him. Every smile, every shifted muscle, every breath. It's almost maddening. They don't talk much, which is both a blessing and a curse.

"Favorite character so far?" she asks as A New Hope's credits run two-ish hours later.

It's close to ten and she's tired but not tired. She doesn't want to leave, that much she knows for sure. His apartment is nice, but it feels lonely and she wonders if he's ever had anyone â€"-girl or otherwise- over before.

Steve thinks for a moment. "Luke Skywalker, I think."

"Ha! I totally knew you'd be Team Luke. He's all sweet and perfect."

She laughs, giddy off wine and his good looks and sweet smile.

"Oh, and who's your favorite?"

"Han Solo, obviously. Harrison Ford was seriously hot. I mean he's still kinda hot in a Really Old Dude kind of way. I'd totally have his babies, just saying."

Steve looks at her like she's a bit crazy and that he kind of likes it. "It's kind of late, are you sure you're up for another one?"

I'm up for anything, so long as you're there some traitorous voice in her says and she smothers it with more wine.

"Of course I am, unless you're quitting on me already."

His smile is slow and warm and it mixes with the wine in her throat. Swallowing thickly, she tucks her free hand under her thigh to keep from doing stupid like reaching out and touching him.

"Never."

* * *

><p>Steve is still in shock as she rinses their wine glasses and plates despite his protests. It's after midnight and she's a bit tipsy after drinking most of the wine by herself.<p>

"I still can't believe it," he says with a rueful shake of his head, perfect hair falling in his eyes a bit.

"I know, right? Most infamous plot twist of all time."

"Poor Luke," Steve commiserates, leaning on the counter next to her and standing close enough to force her to pay extra attention to not breaking anything.

"Don't worry, he's gonna be a total badass," she tells him and reaches for the towel near him, eyes darting to look up at him in time to catch the telling flick of his eyes darting from her chest to her face again. It's too obvious for either of them to pretend like it didn't happen, mostly because the hot flash of pleasure in her gut is too powerful to allow her to be all smooth and subtle about it. Smooth and subtle have never really been her strong suites, anyway.

Steve looks faintly mortified and like he's about to apologize so Darcy blurts out the first thing that comes to mind.

"Natasha says you're not a virgin."

Darcy has always been known to run her mouth, to put it politely, but after a lifetime of saying stupid things at the wrong time, this by far trumps them all. If Loki were to come barreling into Steve's apartment at that moment to kill her personally, she would have counted it a wonderful blessing.

Steve, for his part, looks like he might faint or make a run for it. She doesn't blame him.

"Uh, well, no-no I'm not-"

She cuts him off with her lips because, really, there is no way she is going to talk her way out of that level of embarrassment. It's a bit awkward, leaning to her left with the dish towel in her hands, and she is only about seventy percent sure he's even kind of into her. So she makes her kiss light, the kind that would be easy to pull back from if he wanted.

There's a long moment where it's just her and it's easily the most intensely mortifying moment of her life, and then he lifts a hand, gently cups her cheek and leans into her. She drops the dish towel.

Darcy has experienced a variety of kisses in her twenty six years of life.

Sloppy and drunk, careful and slow, good and bad, and even indifferent. Kissing Steve is like none of those. He kisses her like maybe she might save him from himself. With an honest, desperate sort of enthusiasm that could only come from his unique life experience; from saving the world and waking to find it a totally different, but no less broken place. The slow tug and pull of his lips on hers is less a declaration of lust and passion and more an exchange of understanding and hope. Heat pools low in her belly, but it's overshadowed by the ache in her heart as it beats counterpoint to his.

He pulls away and looks down at her for a long searching moment.

"Can I take you to dinner?"

"Yes," she agrees so quickly it makes him smile. She punishes him for being perfect by kissing him again. He doesn't seem to mind as he bends into her, one hand curling into her hair and the other resting at a respectful place on her lower back.

"Tomorrow?" he asks, when they come up for air.

"It's a date."

* * *

><p>She half expects the universe to say 'fuck you Darcy Lewis, you totally don't deserve this' and ensure that some huge catastrophe manifests itself in less than twenty four hours, but she must have better karma than she thought because he shows up on time and the universe seems to be busy elsewhere.<p>

He'd called to tell her, albeit a bit awkwardly, that she should dress nice, so she does her best. Jane had been excited enough about the whole thing that she'd even shown up to help her get ready. Jane willingly leaving her lab for anything not Thor related is always a big deal.

"You look amazing Darce, seriously," Jane tells her as Darcy grabs her clutch purse.

After much deliberation they'd settled on a black cocktail dress that was just lacy enough to be cute but not overly R-rated and her trusty pair of red pumps to match her lips and purse. She turns to find that Jane's eyes are welling like she's a mom sending her daughter off to prom.

Darcy snorts as she scoops Jane into a quick hug. "Don't wait up for me," she teases and Jane pinches her.

"Make good choices!" Jane yells as Darcy practically takes the stairs two at a time.

He's waiting for her on the stoop in a fucking suit and she kind of forgets to breathe. It's fitted and well-made and he's so beautiful that it's unreal.

Fortunately he is too busy looking at her to seem to notice and she's basically got herself pulled back together again when he offers her a hand.

"You look great, Darcy. Seriously great."

She feels like she could probably take on a couple angry aliens at that statement and beams at him. "Back at you, Mr."

He leads her to an old school Mustang and she whistles. "1965?" she asks, running a hand over the black hood. Her dad had been really into old muscle cars.

He smiles, pleased, and says, "GT K-code Fastback. Or so I'm told."
"

"Sexy," she anoints and he blushes like she thought he might.
"Surprised it's not red, white, and blue."

"I try to keep a low profile."

She bites her lip and can't help but place a hand on his chest. His heart skips a beat beneath her palm. "You're not very good at it," she breathes and looks up at him.

His eyes are dark and full and, after a moment of hesitance, he reaches out to run his knuckles down her cheek, jaw, and neck and she's worried she might actually start purring.

Rather than kiss her, like she really, really wants him to, he takes her arm and leads her to the passenger side of the 'Stang and guides her in before climbing behind the wheel.

"The restaurant was Tony's suggestion, just to warn you," he says as they take off and she smiles in the darkness.

"So it will be overpriced and probably in another language."

"Probably." His teeth glint in the street lights and she presses her thighs together, wondering if it's possible to explode from sexual tension.

The restaurant, surprisingly, is just a good old fashioned Italian

place with nice romantic candlelight and soft music and seriously kickass wine. Steve seems to want to write poetry to his Lasagna and he laughs and blushes when she composes a few verses for him.

They talk comfortably over dessert and Darcy is practically humming with happiness. It's easily the best date she has ever been on. And one of her previous boyfriends took her to Harry Potter Land at Universal Studios, so there was stiff competition.

"Are you close to your parents?" he asks, sipping the last of his red wine.

"Well, just my mom now, but yeah."

Steve flinches. "I'm sorry I didn't know-"

Darcy rolls her eyes and laughs. "Of course you didn't, silly. I was a hardcore daddy's girl for most of my life, of course, but my mom and I kind of bonded after he died when I was nineteen."

"Any siblings?"

"A younger sister. Blonde, beautiful, and relatively stupid."

Steve laughs. "Come on, I'm sure she's not stupid."

"Becca learned at a disgustingly early age that you don't have to try hard when you have a face like an angel," Darcy insists, though her tone is affectionate. Her sister really is kind of stupid and seriously self-centered, but she loves her just the same. Misses her, even, not that Darcy would admit it.

Warmth burns in Steve's eyes. "So what's your excuse for being smart and beautiful?"

Darcy blinks at him and then giggles. "Wow Steve, I'm impressed, that was actually pretty damn smooth."

"I've been practicing."

She quirks a brow at him. "On all the other girls you're dating?"

He laughs and it's as smooth as the whipped chocolate on their shared dessert. "Nah, in the mirror mostly. Tried a few on Tony but that went a little too well so I had to stop."

She snorts in a totally indelicate way, making a mess of herself, and he takes the opportunity to knock her feet out from under her by reaching out and rubbing a bit of mousse from her chin, tugging a bit at her lower lip.

It's insane how quickly he can send her heart into overdrive. His eyes are locked on her lips and his callused finger lingers like maybe he doesn't want to let her go.

The moment is ruined as the waiter brings their check —which Darcy insists on splitting and wins by invoking the name of modern feminism— and he escorts her out of the restaurant, his hand perhaps a little lower on her back than is entirely necessary.

They are almost silent in the car.

It's a charged but not precisely uncomfortable silence, however, like they're each holding their breath in anticipation of something. She rolls her window down and leans back in the seat, closing her eyes as the city air washes over her. Not exactly a pleasant smell, but familiar and strangely electric against her skin.

She can feel his eyes on her like a brand, tracing the curves of her body through her dress, and she reaches out to rest a hand on his thigh because she's faced down a number of angry Gods and she's not afraid. Not really. Not anymore.

His breath catches and his muscles tense beneath her palm.

"Is this alright?" she asks huskily, not wanting to push him. Steve seemed like the kind of guy a girl could push. She watches with fascination as his throat bobs.

"Y-yeah."

"Good," she says, moving her hand inward and up.

He makes a deliciously strangled sound just before she can reach anything really interesting, and snags her hand, pressing a hot kiss to her palm that really shouldn't make her feel like she's on fire, but totally does.

"Jesus, Darcy," he breaths against her skin and she can't help but wriggle in her seat at the intense burst of heat between her thighs. He catches the movement and drives a little faster.

When they arrive outside her apartment building, he hurries to open her door and helps her out. Coming from any other guy it would seem cheesy and like he was trying too hard, but with Steve it's natural and charming and sweet.

They don't speak at all as she buzzes into the building and she pulls him up three flights of stairs before he can protest, his palm perfect, wonderful, and hot in hers.

Outside her door she turns to ask him in because she'd be willing to give up just about anything to have him naked and on top of her, but he silences her by capturing her lips in a kiss that proves he definitely isn't a virgin. His tongue is hot and sure against hers and she whimpers into the sensation, throwing her arms around his neck as he tugs her flush against him. His body is practically thrumming with restraint, like he doesn't quite trust himself not to ravish her, which is sweet but awful all at the same time. Between one stuttering breath and the next her back is up against the door and his hand skates a path down her side and over her ass to grip her thigh, urging her leg up and around his hips. A desire she is more than happy to fulfill as she rocks instinctively against him.

The sound he makes when she connects with the hard line of his dick is something she is pretty positive she will remember till the day she dies.

He pulls away gasping, her lipstick smeared across his face and she whimpers a protest that has him smiling fiercely against her neck as

he holds her close.

"Y-you could come inâ€ if you wanted," she says, barely recognizing her own voice through the pounding blood in her ears.

He lets out a tumultuous sigh and slowly releases her, pressing his palms to the door on either side of her head and looking down at her. His pupils are blown wide and dark, his cheeks flushed.

"I've been doing some reading on modern dating," he tells her in a voice that rumbles straight down her spine.

"Terrible decision," she says, running the hand in his hair down the side of his face and neck. His pulse leaps beneath her palm.

"I admit, the whole Internet thing is pretty handy."

"Super handy," she echoes, completely distracted by the feel of his collarbone through his shirt.

"Darcyâ€!" he begs, voice strained, and she looks up at him. "I want to do this right."

She bites her lip and watches him watch her. "This doesn't feel right to you?"

Steve sighs again, like maybe he's carrying some invisible and terrible weight, which, she figures, he totally is, and rests his forehead against hers. His hand cups her face. "It's complicated, Darcy.

Thor save her, she really loves the way he says her name.

"Doesn't have to be," she whispers, less because she totally wants him to help her out of her dress and more because she wants to comfort him.

He's right, of course, it is complicated. She knew that on her cab ride to meet him at the bar, but she really, really doesn't want it to be.

He smiles down at her, thumb rubbing along the slope of her cheek. "Be patient with an old man. Where I'm from, you married a girl before you went to bed with her."

Darcy feigns an affronted gasp. "You thought I was going to sleep with you? How dare you, sir, how dare you! I am a lady of class."

He chuckles but his expression is warm and affectionate. "I want to see you again."

"Then see me again."

He kisses her slowly and carefully, like he's trying to learn everything about her from the suction of their lips. "I want to see you again soon."

Darcy nips at his lower lip. "Even better."

* * *

><p>Steve has to leave for 'work' two days later, but they keep in contact.</p>

He's pretty busy, but she gets an adorable good morning and good night text nearly every day for two weeks, and she's basically floating through life. Four days after he leaves he tells her he misses her, and three more after that flowers are delivered with a sweet little note attached. Tony hand delivers them because apparently he finds the whole thing hysterical.

"Darce, we need to talk." Jane says one morning over coffee. They're at a little cafÃ© near Stark Tower and the place is pretty empty, for once.

"Am I in trouble, mom?" Darcy grumbles, adding some more sugar to her mug.

Jane rolls her eyes. "I wanted to talk about your positionâ€¦ in the lab."

Darcy stills, her stomach dropping. "Oh god, you're totally going to fire me, aren't you?"

Jane shakes her head and snorts. "Oh come on Darcy, you know I like having you around, but do you like _being_ _around_ is the real question."

"Of course I do! I mean, yeah, sure, I know next to nothing about astrophysics or whatever, but I get to hang out with you and the benefits are nice-"

"I've been talking to Tony and he thinks you ought to go back to school," Jane interrupts. "I know you'd been hoping to get into Law School and he says he can make that happen, all courtesy of Shield, of course."

Darcy flinches. "That feels a lot like charity."

Jane rolls her eyes. "Oh come on, Darce. They totally owe you. They're the reason you had to drop out of school in the first place."

"Alright, that's true. But stillâ€¦ it feels like cheating, or something."

"Darcyâ€¦ you can't be my assistant forever. I'm surprised you stuck around this long, to be honest."

"Ouch, _harsh_."

Jane throws a bit of her bagel at her. "You're a driven, talented, and smart woman, Darcy. You deserve better."

Darcy opens her mouth to say something sarcastic, even though she is totally touched by Jane's words, but the cafÃ© chooses that moment to literally explode.

End
file.